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23 September 2013

Mr M Clutsom  
Headteacher  
Upton Cross Primary School  
Upton Cross  
Liskeard  
PL14 5AX

Dear Mr Clutsom

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Upton Cross Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 September 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking incisive and urgent action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Attend Ofsted conferences 'Better English and mathematics' and a 'Getting to Good' seminar
- make use of the Ofsted survey and professional development materials for English and Mathematics available on the Ofsted website
- strengthen the school improvement plan by inserting interim milestones so that governors can evaluate termly progress towards agreed targets
- take account of individual starting points to school when evaluating pupils' progress

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, and seven members of the Governing Body. A phone call was held with a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was scrutinised including: the outcomes of monitoring activities, the impact of performance management procedures, staff meeting minutes, local authority plans for support and visit notes, parental survey responses and governing body minutes.

## **Context**

Since the June inspection, the school has formed a hard federation with St. Kew Community Primary School. The executive headteacher leads and a new single governing body serves both schools.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher, staff and governing body are acutely aware of the steps required for the school to become at least good. The school improvement plan contains challenging targets that demonstrate a clear determination from all to strengthen the quality of education provided. Morale, relationships and ambition drive within the school are strong. As a result, there is an urgency and incisiveness to the actions taken since the inspection to bring about the improvements needed to become good.

Senior leaders are focused more closely on the progress pupils are making. Periodic checks, during pupil progress meetings every six weeks, are holding the executive headteacher and staff firmly to account. New job descriptions together with 'non-negotiable' expectations, linked to new performance management arrangements, are raising the performance of teachers. Appropriate actions are in place to support any teachers who are not yet consistently good.

The move to a federation is already providing additional opportunities to work collaboratively. Moderation meetings between schools are helping teachers to have a much clearer picture of pupils' individual needs and next steps in learning. Visits to good schools are improving teachers' planning for mixed age classes and ensuring all groups are sufficiently challenged in lessons.

The new cycle of activities to check on the work of the school pulls together: data on the progress pupils are making, lesson observation findings, work scrutiny outcomes and the views of parents and pupils. This, combined with new six weekly 'impact reports', ensures reliable information is gathered and can be acted upon.

The new federated governing body has strengthened the overall leadership of the school. Weekly meetings between the Chair of Governing Body and the headteacher

are keeping governors abreast of current developments. Clear roles and responsibilities with specific deadlines for actions, identified in the governor action plan, have quickly established a systematic approach to checking on the work of the school.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The school has received good quality support from the local authority. This includes action to support the strategic move to a federation, brokering school to school support to improve the quality of teaching and appointing a school improvement partner who continues to challenge the school further. The executive headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body value the support being received and recognise that, together, the combination of support and challenge is bring about the necessary improvements to becoming a good school.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall and as below.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light

**Her Majesty's Inspector**